



Australian Government
Productivity Commission

Using performance information to drive improvements in out-of-home care services: 22 years of the Report on Government Services

Ailsa McPherson

**Senior Research Analyst,
Productivity Commission**

Childaware approaches conference

15-16 May 2017

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

Aim of presentation

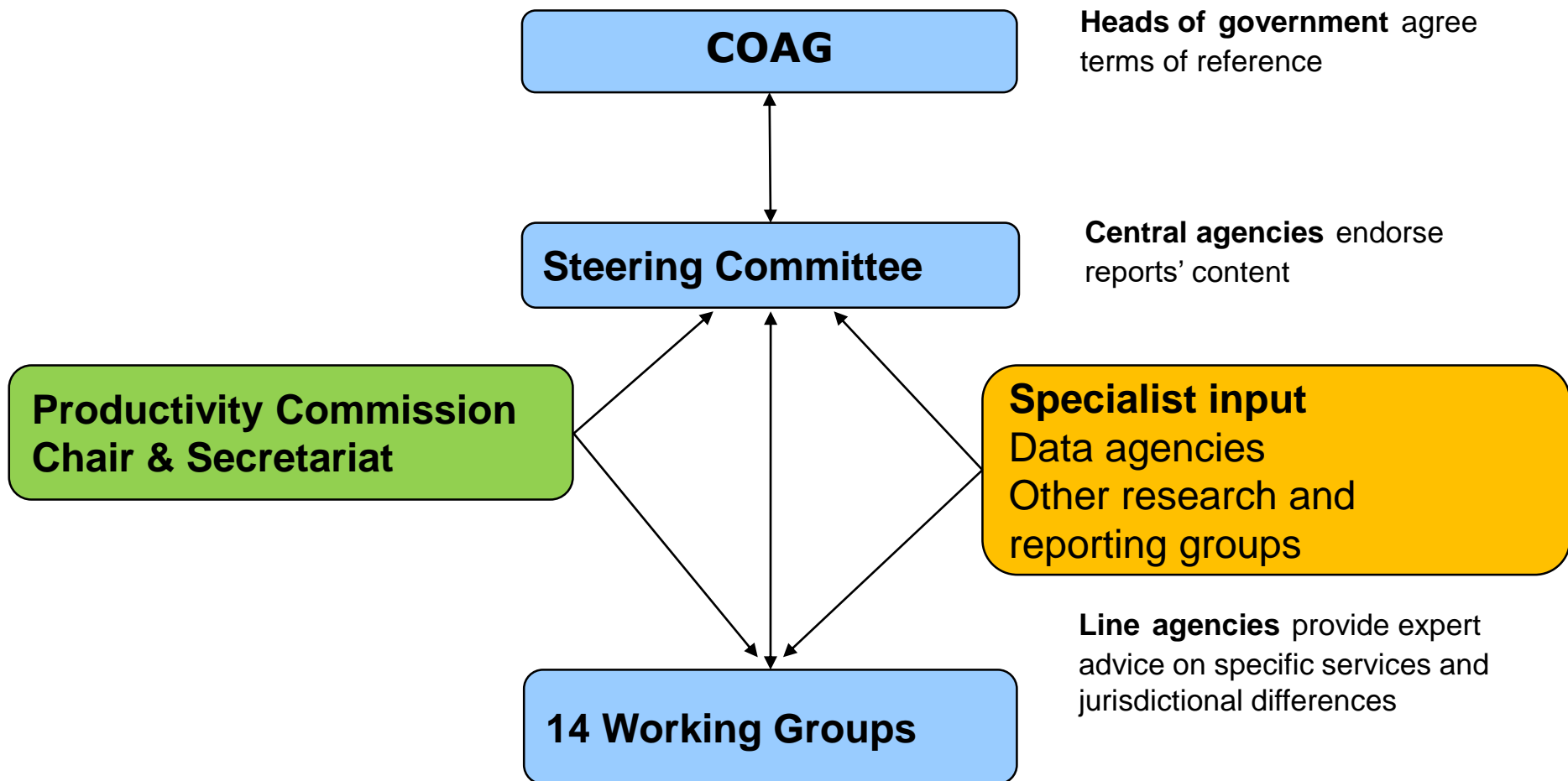
- Introduce you to the Report on Government Services (RoGS)
- Show how RoGS performance information for child protection services has changed over time
- Identify how performance reporting can facilitate change and improvement in services

Introducing the Report on Government Services (RoGS)

What is the Report on Government Services?

- An annual report providing information on the equity, effectiveness and efficiency of government services in Australia
- Aims to facilitate improved service delivery to improve the wellbeing of all Australians, through high quality information on the performance of government services
- Report is used to inform planning and policies, for budgeting, and to demonstrate government accountability

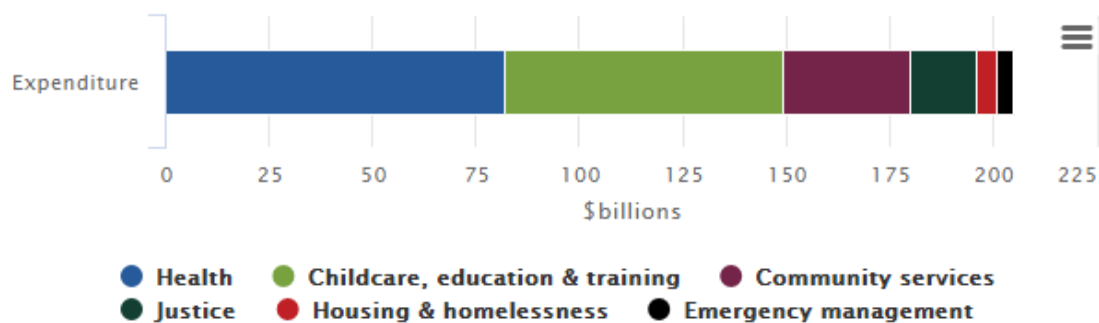
Governance



Scope of report

- Focuses on 'social services' in six sectors covering 17 service areas
- Around \$205 billion (69%) of Commonwealth/State/Territory government recurrent expenditure

Figure 1 – Proportion of governments' recurrent expenditure by sector^a

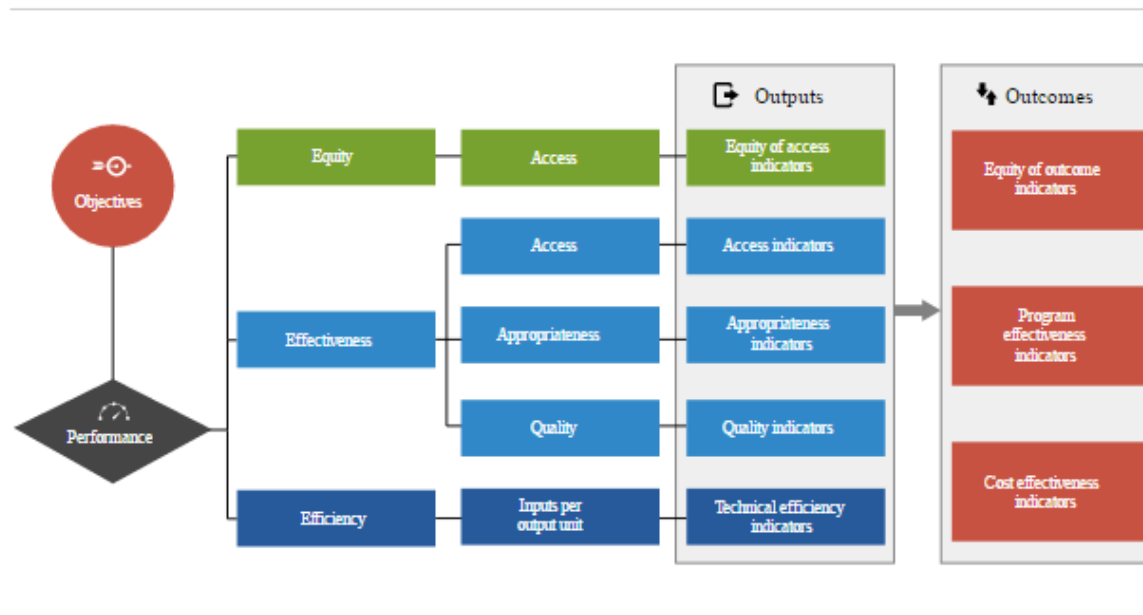


Highcharts.com

Performance indicator framework

- 17 service areas, each has a chapter in the report
- Each service area has a performance indicator framework and a set of nationally agreed objectives

Figure 2 – General performance indicator framework



How performance reporting in the RoGS has changed over time

The first report - 1995

- First report published in December 1995
- Presented information relating to effectiveness and efficiency of government-funded (and usually government-provided) services
- 9 areas reported against - hospitals, public housing, schools, VET, police, courts, corrective services AND 'support services for individuals and families' which included child protection and alternative care for children, and crisis and supported accommodation

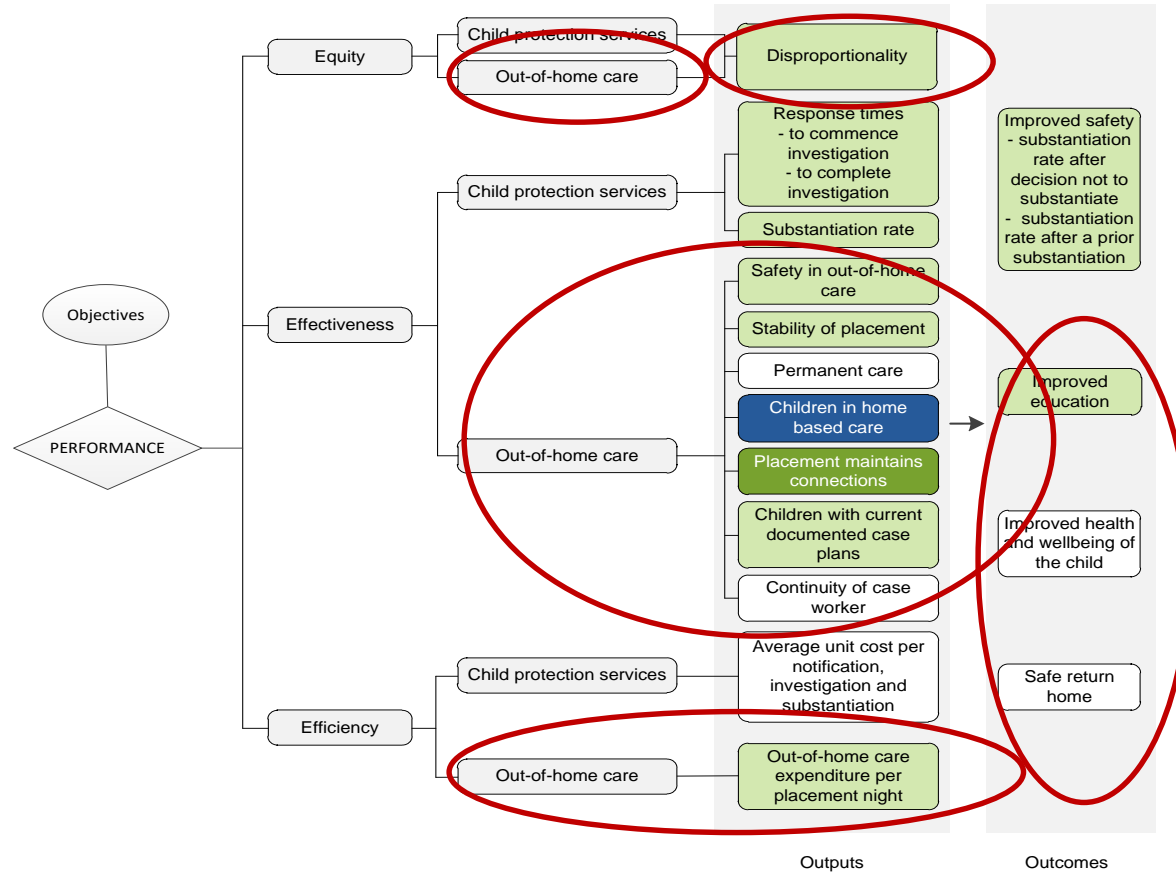
The first report – 1995 *contd*

- Two indicators on out-of-home care:
 - *Length of time in care*
 - ... Based on data for NSW, Qld, WA, SA, Tas and the ACT
 - ... 50 per cent remained in care for more than 2 years
 - *Number of placements*
 - ... Based on data for NSW, Qld, WA, SA and ACT
 - ... 65 per cent of children in care for the entire year had one placement
- 2017 data (measures are different, so not completely comparable)
 - *Length of time in care: 64 per cent in care for more than 2 years*
 - *40 per cent of children leaving care had one placement*
 - *66.5 per cent of children leaving care who were in care for less than 12 months had one placement*

The most recent report - 2017

- The original 9 areas from the 1995 report - hospitals, social housing, schools, VET, police, courts, corrective services, child protection (including OOHC) and homelessness services
- And 8 new areas – early childhood education and care, fire and other emergency events, primary and community health, ambulance, mental health, aged care, disability services, youth justice
- 17 areas in total

Child protection framework



Key to indicators*

- Text Most recent data for all measures are comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for at least one measure are comparable and complete
- Text Most recent data for all measures are either not comparable and/or not complete
- Text No data reported and/or no measures yet developed

* A description of the comparability and completeness of each measure is provided in indicator interpretation boxes within the chapter

How does this reporting facilitate improved services?

How can this facilitate improved services?

- Measuring performance and reporting publicly creates incentives for better performance by:
 - helping to clarify government objectives and responsibilities
 - promoting analysis
 - making performance more transparent
 - providing indicators of performance over time
 - encouraging ongoing performance improvements by highlighting improvements and innovation

Improvement over time in out-of-home care: example one

- Government objective: To provide services that meet the needs of individual children and young people in the child protection system
- Performance measure: Children in out-of-home care placed with relatives/kin increase from 44% to 49%

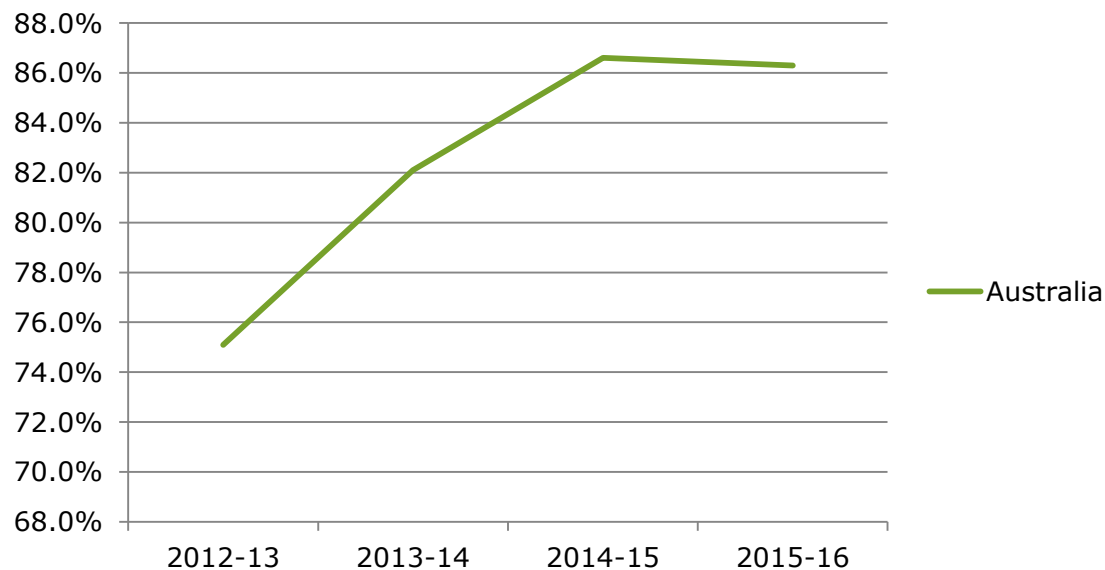
Children placed with relatives/kin



Improvement over time in out-of-home care: example two

- Government objective: To provide services that meet the needs of individual children and young people in the child protection system
- Performance measure: Children with documented case plans increased from 75% to 86%

Children with documented case plans



Caveats and context

- Performance reporting can facilitate change leading to improved services
- RoGs performance indicators as 'tin openers'
- Providing appropriate demographic and policy/procedure context (profile, indicator boxes and footnotes)
- Reporting considered credible, relevant and timely
- Further development:
 - *Developing performance indicators for performance gaps in the framework*
 - *Improving on reporting complete and comparable information for all jurisdictions*

Areas for development

- Out-of-home care indicators to be developed:
 - *Client experience*
 - *Health and wellbeing of the child*
- Improvement to indicators already reported:
 - *Improving comparability in order to compare performance across jurisdictions (e.g., children with documented case plans)*
 - *Improving completeness so that all jurisdictions are reporting against all indicators (e.g., safety in out-of-home care)*

Thank you

Questions?

For further information please email:

gsp@pc.gov.au

To view the Report on Government Services go to RoGS home page at www.pc.gov.au/rogs

To view the Child protection chapter scroll down to the Community services volume (F) and select the Child Protection chapter